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A Framework for Foreign Humanitarian Assistance Operations

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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4 May 2011

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Abstract

The United States military has been a critical component in past foreign humanitarian assistance operations and will continue to be so in the future. There are several examples, particularly during the 2010 relief effort in Haiti, that demonstrate how the U.S. could better translate its political objective into a synchronized operational response. An analysis of command and control and logistics operational functions during the relief effort shows that prior operational planning is required to achieve unity of effort. A national framework for collaboration during foreign humanitarian assistance operations that emphasizes prior planning instead of ad hoc efforts during actual crises does not currently exist. Unity of effort, while conducting foreign humanitarian assistance, requires the creation of a common framework informed by the domestic National Response Framework and lessons learned from past operations

Introduction

Foreign humanitarian assistance (FHA) operations are integral to the foreign policy objectives of the United States, but there are still glaring gaps and seams between the various agencies that respond. Geographic combatant commanders have greater capability to support disaster response than any other agency in the U.S. government, but other agencies typically take the lead while conducting foreign humanitarian assistance operations. The afflicted host nation often has inadequate resources to immediately respond to a disaster, and must rely on international assistance. This resource mismatch presents a unique challenge to achieve unity of effort. Domestic disasters present similar challenges to local governments, state, and federal responders, though in the U.S. their efforts are synchronized through the National Response Framework (NRF). The U.S. cannot afford to stumble during foreign humanitarian assistance operations because success promotes stability while failure results in embarrassment and increased global risk. The operational functions of command and control and logistics and their role in mitigating risk often decide the measure of effectiveness in an operation. Unity of effort while conducting foreign humanitarian assistance requires the creation of a common framework informed by the domestic National Response Framework and lessons learned from past humanitarian assistance operations.

Foreign humanitarian assistance operations will only become more integral to achieving U.S. political objectives, so the U.S. operational planning by individual agencies must become more synchronized. The need for closer collaboration by the Department of Defense (DoD) and the Department of State (DoS) is something both sides can appreciate. Estimates show that there will be an increase of 1.2 billion people by 2025, mainly

concentrated in vulnerable coastal areas.¹ FHA operations will become more prevalent than in the past because disasters will increasingly occur in areas vital to U.S. interests. The DoS recognizes the need to develop a “framework to bring together all the resources, expertise, and capabilities of the U.S. government and our international partners in support of that mission.”² History is replete with examples of nations not combining their capabilities effectively to achieve their operational and strategic objectives. In January of 2010, Haiti experienced a 7.7 magnitude earthquake that tested the mechanisms in place to respond to foreign humanitarian disasters, which is an example military professionals can derive lessons learned from to increase the effectiveness of future military operations.

The response to the earthquake that devastated Haiti on January 12th, 2010, provides several examples of how DoD and DoS did not synchronize command and control and logistics operational functions. Stronger collaboration prior to the disaster could have mitigated many of the deficiencies, especially since most of the military response was necessarily focused on near term human suffering. Former U.S. Ambassador James Dobbins refers to the short time between a disaster and the following international response as the “golden hour.”³ It is the time when first responders must already have command and control relationships in place, logistics phased for continuing operations, and the two synchronized with each other so that supplies reach where they are most required. Though there were

¹ U.S. Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, *National Military Strategy of the United States of America*, (Washington, DC: CJCS, 2011), 2, http://www.jcs.mil/content/files/2011-02/020811084800_2011_NMS_-_08_FEB_2011.pdf (accessed 29 March 2011).

² U.S. Secretary of State, *Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review: Leading Through Civilian Power*, (Washington, DC: Department of State, 2010), 127, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/153108.pdf> (accessed 25 March 2011).

³ James Dobbins, Seth G. Jones, Keith Crane, and Beth Cole DeGrasse, *The Beginner's Guide to Nation-Building*, (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 2007), 15-17, http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/2007/RAND_MG557.pdf (accessed 28 March 2011).

many positive examples of ad hoc execution that resulted from the heroic efforts of U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM), and the Chief of Mission to Haiti, a pre-planned response could have achieved greater results.

Despite enormous capacity to mitigate near term suffering in the event of a disaster, U.S. military involvement often does not result in long-term stability in a country. Many societies revert back to their original behavior after an occupying force has departed.⁴ The greatest stabilizer is economics. Before World War I, Guatemala and Costa Rica required the least amount of U.S. military intervention in South America and were also the recipients of the greatest amount of U.S. investment.⁵ Though this example may span more than a century, it is particularly telling that the same companies investing in Guatemala and Costa Rica were not willing to invest in Haiti.⁶ Instead, the U.S. military became involved. In the past several decades, Haiti's uncertain political environment has obligated several military interventions and reduced its capacity to absorb disaster. More recently, inadequate Haitian resources required a massive multinational FHA operation in 2010 to prevent an enormous loss of life and mass migration. Military intervention would have more lasting effects if it were better synchronized with interagency and non-governmental investment partners.

The National Response Framework (NRF) provides a disaster-hardened domestic example for possible improvements to planning and execution of foreign humanitarian assistance operations. The NRF is currently the best solution for interagency coordination

⁴ Paul Hilaski, *Culture and Identity: Critical Considerations for Successful State-building Endeavors*, (Fort Leavenworth, KS: School of Advanced Military Studies, 2010), 74, <http://oai.dtic.mil/oai/oai?verb=getRecord&metadataPrefix=html&identifier=ADA522946> (accessed 27 March 2011).

⁵ Max Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power*, (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2002), 139-140.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 320.

during domestic disasters. An iterative line of domestic crisis response plans culminated in the release of the NRF, hastened by the events surrounding September 11th, 2001, and Hurricane Katrina in August 2005. The latter crisis unveiled an alarming lack of synchronization between command and control and logistics operational functions. One of the lessons learned from the response to Hurricane Katrina was that the operational plans meant to coordinate a national response were still under development because of inadequate coordinating mechanisms.⁷ Failure during Hurricane Katrina resulted in the development of the NRF. The coordinating mechanisms in the NRF are necessary because local officials cannot always adequately respond to a disaster. The NRF provides the mechanisms for unity of effort because it relies on prior planning between local, state and federal officials. Responsible stakeholders rely on common interest to solidify a unified command and ensure unity of effort, but at the same time respect each agency's chain of command. There are many similarities to the poor planning and ad hoc execution of relief efforts in Haiti to difficulties encountered during the response to Hurricane Katrina.

Current Coordination Mechanisms

The Department of Defense, USAID, and the Department of State all conduct FHA, but the mechanisms for them to respond with unity of effort are disjointed. There are numerous strategic level documents directing single agencies to collaborate with other agencies to plan and execute FHA. Lessons learned from the 2010 Haiti FHA operation will show that unity of effort cannot be implemented at the operational level if it is only coordinated at the strategic level. An analysis of existing doctrine shows that FHA is not organized for unity of effort in an interagency operation.

⁷ U.S. President, *The Federal Response to Hurricane Katrina: Lessons Learned*, (Washington, DC: White House, February 23rd, 2006), 53, <http://library.stmarytx.edu/acadlib/edocs/katrinawh.pdf> (accessed 10 April 2011).

Recently released documents increase the allowance for coordination at the strategic and operational level, but there are several inconsistencies. The National Military Strategy of 2011, released by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, directs the Combatant Commanders to plan and exercise across their “seams of responsibility for full spectrum contingencies...and help mitigate and contain the human and economic impact [of disaster].”⁸ The strategy specifically directs Combatant Commanders to support USAID during a humanitarian crisis. DoD Directive 5100.46 on Foreign Disaster Relief, released in 1975, provides the authority for the DoD to support the Department of State in foreign humanitarian assistance operations only after they occur. The directive also only directs Combatant Commanders to conduct FHA and report progress back to the Joint Chiefs of Staff. There is no mention for the combatant commander to coordinate with the comparable theater-strategic entity in the State Department. Joint Publication 3-29 on *Foreign Humanitarian Assistance* details interagency coordination at the strategic and operational levels for the military. Unfortunately, JP 3-29 only addresses military coordination processes and has no directive authority for DoS.

Inadequate coordination starts at the legislative level. The Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, amended in 2002, provides legal authority for the President to appoint a Special Coordinator for International Disaster Assistance, who ensures a reasonable response to international disasters. After many decades of bureaucratic transformation, the current Special Coordinator and the USAID Administrator have evolved to be the same person. Subsequent legislation delegates authority for international disaster assistance to the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA). The Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 and subsequent amendments resulted in OFDA to have a reactive culture, which prevents it from

⁸ *National Military Strategy of the United States of America*, 15.

properly coordinating with DoD at the operational level prior to a disaster.⁹ OFDA prioritizes immediate disaster response over planning because the former induces funding.

The DoS wants to create a framework for coordination, based on recently released documents. In the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR), nested underneath the amended Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 and released in 2010, DoS recognized that USAID requires better coordination mechanisms to act as a lead agency. It clearly assigns USAID as the lead agency for FHA, which is one of six core areas that DoS must build its strength to carry out U.S. foreign policy. The QDDR makes it clear that U.S. interagency response during an FHA operation would benefit from more refined operational structures.¹⁰

An example of the gap in operational coordination mechanisms occurs in the Field Operations Guide (FOG). This document was created by USAID and OFDA to provide operational and tactical guidance. In one section, the FOG discusses coordination between the DoD's Humanitarian Assistance Survey Teams (HAST) and OFDA's Disaster Assistance Response Teams (DART). The FOG assumes that unity of effort will not exist between the HAST and the DART when it says that "if assessment teams or DARTs encounter HASTs, they should first ascertain the objectives of the mission of the HAST."¹¹ In an effort that assumes unity of effort, the DART and HAST would be working together in an initial assessment of a disaster and have the same mission assigned.

⁹ Richard Olson, *The Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID): A Critical Juncture Analysis, 1964-2003*, (Miami, FL: Florida International University, 2005), 38, http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/disaster_assistance/publications/ofda_cjanalysis_02_21-2005.pdf (accessed 28 March 2011).

¹⁰ *Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review: Leading Through Civilian Power*, 116.

¹¹ U.S. Agency for International Development, *Field Operations Guide*, (Washington, DC: Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance, 2005), F-8.

None of the documents that coordinate FHA between the combatant commander, Chief of Mission, and USAID provides a consistent framework to plan and synchronize actions at the operational level. President Bush recognized this problem and released NSPD-44 in December 2005 in an attempt to improve reconstruction and stabilization missions in foreign countries and charged this mission to the newly created office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stability(S/CRS). This office has subsequently created the Interagency Management System which is a framework for “whole of government” response. NSPD-44 specifically states that USAID’s role under the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 is not changed. Since the QDDR directs USAID to be the lead agency for FHA and NSPD-44 directs S/CRS to lead “whole of government” responses, JP 3-29 is obsolete because it directs coordination between OFDA and the combatant commander (or an assigned Joint Task Force). JP 3-29 makes no mention of “whole of government” operations. Stove-piped documents could be synchronized by creating one framework that includes all organizations that may be involved in FHA.

Lessons Learned from Haiti

The overwhelming amount of resources from the Department of Defense was vital to the success of FHA operations in Haiti. Deficiencies in operational functions, however, prevented efficient use of these resources and resulted in long-term consequences. The JTF-Haiti Commander, LTG Keen, wanted to achieve unity of effort during Operation UNIFIED RESPONSE through “coordination and collaboration” (C2) with U.S. and international agencies instead of through the function of command and control.¹² In Haiti, C2 was especially important between DoD, USAID as the lead federal agency, and the Chief of

¹² Joint Center for Operational Analysis, “Operation UNIFIED RESPONSE Haiti Earthquake Response,” Powerpoint, 14 May 2010, 98.

Mission. One critic commenting on the efficacy of the lead federal agency concept as a coordination mechanism said that “more often than not, the lead agency is left with little ability to obtain the support and cooperation of the other agencies; therefore, a coordinated effort is never fully achieved.”¹³ Lack of formal coordination mechanisms at the operational level reduces unity of effort because one agency’s strength cannot be properly leveraged and shared. For example, DoD could have offset its lack of cultural awareness in Haiti through prior planning with agencies that regularly work in Haiti. This lack of prior interagency coordination resulted in a flawed operational design, reducing the effectiveness of C2 and the capacity to conduct Reception, Staging, Onward Movement, and Integration (RSO&I) of relief forces.

Operating within the confines of a different culture is not something that can easily be overcome by the military. The problem with the use of DoD as a primary means in FHA operations is that the long-term recovery of a society requires that the people view the government as legitimate. The military end-state of the FHA operation in Haiti was to set “conditions in the region for host nation, interagency, and international agencies to mitigate near term human suffering and accelerate long-term regional recovery.”¹⁴ OFDA has historically overcome the factor of culture by combining its depth of regional experience with flexible options to respond to crises.¹⁵ OFDA has the capacity to respond immediately to a disaster with a regionally expert DART. In contrast, the DoD deployed 22,000 troops to

¹³ John Lepak, *Interagency Coordination Efforts Concerning Stabilization and Reconstruction: Who is taking the lead?*, (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 2009), 3, <http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA502116&Location=U2&doc=GetTRDoc.pdf> (accessed 04 April 2011).

¹⁴ Commander, U.S. Fourth Fleet to Commander, Task Force 43 and Commander, Task Force 46, Message, 150130Z JAN 10, 15 January 2010.

¹⁵ Olson, *The Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID): A Critical Juncture Analysis, 1964-2003*, 24.

Haiti, many of whom had just completed a training cycle for a deployment to Afghanistan and Iraq.¹⁶

USAID has the resident cultural knowledge of a society that the U.S. is trying to help. Traditionally, the DoD understanding of Haitian culture has impeded the accomplishment of its objective. The stated objective in 1994 of the UN resolution for Operation UPHOLD DEMOCRACY was to “restore Haitian democracy, provide security, stabilize the country, create a new police force and professionalize the Haitian armed forces.”¹⁷ The 1994 military invasion of Haiti did not support the political objective of stabilization because it did not reverse decades of institutionalized brutality and corruption. Instead, the U.S. spent much of its effort on supplying its own troops with adequate facilities and force protection.¹⁸ Rajiv Shah, administrator for USAID in 2010, wanted to “make sure that we stick to the principle of building as much local capacity as possible in the execution of the work that needs to be done.”¹⁹ U.S. troops trained for combat that supported FHA operations in 2010 probably were not the best means to support local capacity building, even if they did provide considerable manpower to distribute aid.

USAID’s cultural knowledge of Haiti was not shared with DoD because of inadequate C2. Though the United States Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) awaited the request for forces from OFDA and the State Department before making any formal actions,

¹⁶ Juan Forero, “U.S. Military Role in Haiti Met with Mixed Emotions,” *NPR*, 25 February 2010, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=124052139> (accessed 08 April 2011).

¹⁷ Hilaski, *Culture and Identity: Critical Considerations for Successful State-building Endeavors*, 74.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 67.

¹⁹ The White House, “Press Briefing on the U.S. Government Response to the Haiti Earthquake,” (Washington, DC: Office of the Press Secretary, 19 January 2010), <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/press-briefing-us-government-response-haiti-earthquake-0> (accessed 8 April 2011).

there was much DoD confusion about the roles and responsibilities of the lead agency. Inappropriate comments by senior DoD officials and the C2 structure during the crisis generated this confusion. A week following the crisis the Deputy Commander of JTF-H, Major General Dan Allyn, responded to a question about unity of effort by saying that JTF-H will “ensure that the U.S. government effort is synchronized.”²⁰ Synchronizing the government effort though was a role for the lead federal agency. JTF-H’s C2 diagram indicates confusion about its roles and responsibilities. A comparison of Figure 1 and Figure 2 reveals that USAID did not properly act to synchronize efforts as a lead agency until 27 January. The Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Center (HACC) under JTF-H coordinated directly with the United Nation led Joint Operations and Tasking Center (JOTC) while USAID worked on the C2 periphery. JTF-H, because of its enormous capability and initiative, adopted an early and continuous leadership role in the crisis, though it is questionable whether this nested with the strategic objective given DoD’s historical lack of cultural understanding and USAID’s designation as lead federal agency.

USAID’s unfamiliarity with the Joint Operation and Planning Execution System (JOPES) hindered unity of effort. There was no standing humanitarian assistance/disaster response (HA/DR) Operations Plan (OPLAN), and no Time Phased Force Deployment Data to take off the shelf and execute the mobilization and deployment of a significant amount of forces.²¹ Guidance from LTG Keen, the commander of JTF-Haiti, was to “just to keep sending stuff until I tell you to stop.”²² LTG Keen drove the force flow, and history suggests that the success of interagency coordination has largely been based on harmony between

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid., 94.

²² Ibid., 147.

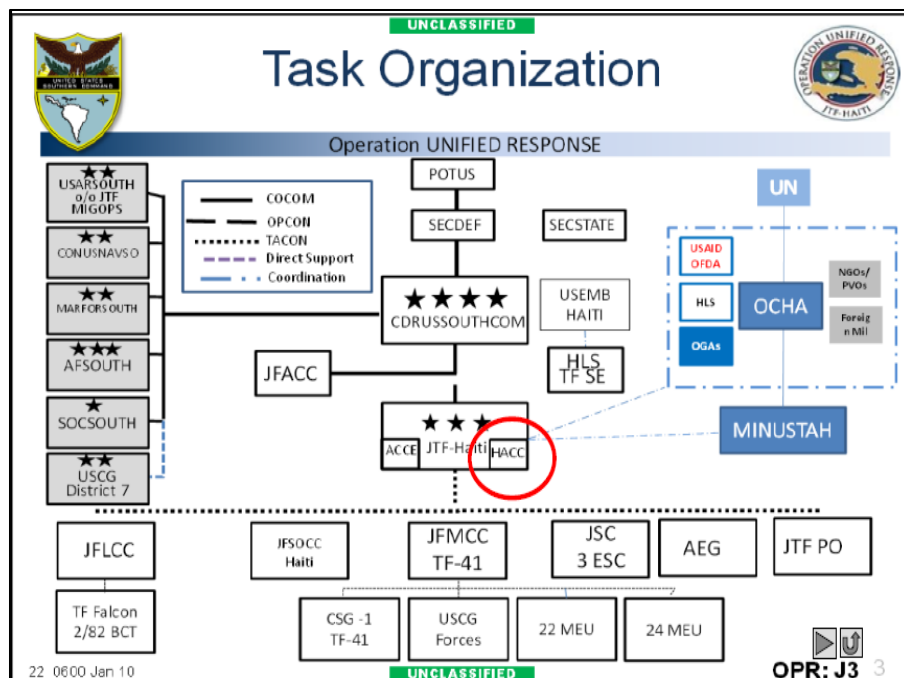


Figure 1. JTF-H Organizational Chart on 22 Jan 2010.²³

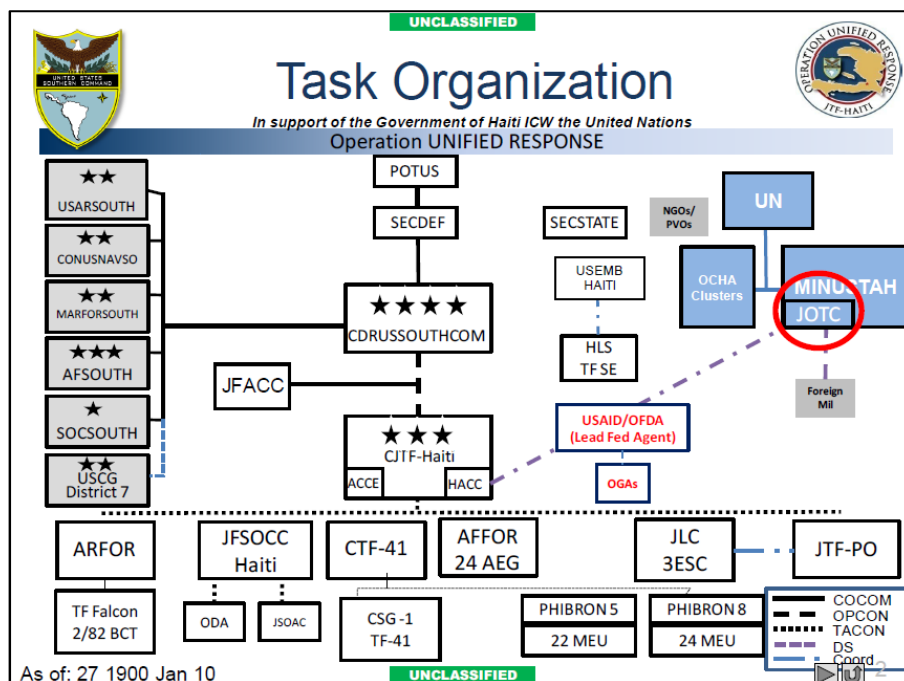


Figure 2. JTF-H Organizational Chart on 27 Jan 2010.²⁴

²³ Operation UNIFIED RESPONSE Haiti Earthquake Response, 127.

²⁴ Ibid., 133.

personalities. During Operation RESTORE HOPE in Somalia, Lt. General Robert Johnson improved his staff's interagency battle rhythm by ensuring that his deputy attended all of Ambassador Robert Oakley's daily meetings. This "alternative informal coordination mechanism" only lasted until the turnover of the principal leaders.²⁵ Formal coordination mechanisms would have provided a sturdy C2 structure that encouraged different agencies to coordinate force requirements. Robust coordination between SOUTHCOM, USAID, and regional Chiefs of Mission prior to 2010 might have resulted in a refined OPLAN and better force flow.

The lead agency for FHA must be aware of DoD planning processes if it is to determine military force requirements. The only mention of JOPES in OFDA's Field Operations Guide is in the acronym section. The lack of identified force requirements slowed RSO&I, impeding force flow until SOUTHCOM created a HACC from its operations and logistics offices. This ad hoc process ensured that the lead agency had little control of military force requirements, though the Field Operations Guide does recognize that during deployment "the military will generally fill the void as it sees fit."²⁶ Prior planning, based on adequate coordination mechanisms between DoS and DoD, is more reliable than possible harmony between two leading personalities.

National Response Framework: An Evolution

Unity of effort in domestic disaster response has improved incrementally through the cycle of disaster, interagency response, public approbation, and application of lessons learned. Analysis of C2 and logistics functions during Hurricane Katrina reveals many

²⁵ Derek Lane and David Anderson, "AFRICOM: Reconstruction and Stability Through the Provincial Reconstruction Team-Enhanced, Enabled by Unity of Command," (SWJ, 22 November 2009), 9, <http://smallwarsjournal.com> (accessed 11 April 2011).

²⁶ U.S. Agency for International Development, *Field Operations Guide*, F-6.

similarities to the deficiencies in FHA interagency coordination. The primary criticism of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) was for its slow response and inability to coordinate a unified interagency effort. Just as in FHA operations, many of the deficiencies in domestic emergency management operations were the result of inadequate coordination mechanisms. The U.S. developed the *National Response Plan* (NRP) following the events of September 11th, 2001. Analysis of case studies before and after the release of the *National Response Framework* (NRF) in 2008 presents to the DoD and DoS many possible ways to improve unity of effort during FHA operations.

The coordination mechanisms in the NRP prevented the federal government from planning and augmenting insufficient state resources after the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Local and state leaders responding to Hurricane Katrina operated under the planning assumption that federal resources would augment inadequate local resources. Essentially, response to domestic disasters is a “pull” system from local government officials to FEMA and FEMA to interagency partners like the DoD. Peter Verga, the Chief of Staff to the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Policy, highlighted the problem with this “pull” system when he related that he was not aware of any DoD or Department of Homeland Security (DHS) documents that specified requirements during interagency operations.²⁷ The lack of coordinating mechanisms prevented the DoD from responding quickly to Hurricane Katrina. For example, when Secretary of DHS Michael Chertoff wanted information on DoD search and rescue activities and efforts to collect information on the ground, the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) responded that it

²⁷ Base Closure and Realignment Commission, *2005 BRAC Commission Hearing*, Afternoon Session, Aug. 11, 2005, 34-35, http://www.brac.gov/docs/CertifiedTranscript_11AugPM.pdf (accessed 10 April 2011).

had received no such request to conduct operations. Prior planning to define roles and responsibilities were insufficient between DHS and its interagency partners.

The evolution of the NRP into the locally focused NRF resulted in better interagency coordination mechanisms and improved operational response to disasters. One of the most important lessons learned from Hurricane Katrina is that initiative at the operational level reduced near term suffering. The NRF fosters initiative throughout the government by disconnecting the constraint of a declaration of an “incident of national significance” as a requirement for federal response.²⁸ The U.S. Coast Guard demonstrated initiative in its rapid response to Hurricane Katrina through extensive planning, strong local relationships, and its pragmatic retreat to a safe distance shortly before landfall.²⁹ Though some individual units and agencies did show initiative, coordination at the operational level reduced unity of effort. After USCG rescue teams transported survivors to high ground, the victims were stranded at these sites without any food, water, or facilities because their location was not relayed to another agency delivering supplies.³⁰ This break down in communications shows that well trained and motivated tactical units on the ground were not properly coordinated at the operational level.

Initiative was also shown by the DoD during FHA operations in Haiti, but ad hoc initiative is no substitute for a framework that enshrines unity of effort and promotes

²⁸ U.S. Department of Homeland Security, *National Response Framework*, (Washington, DC: DHS, 2008), 8, <http://www.fema.gov/pdf/emergency/nrf/nrf-core.pdf> (accessed 29 March 2011).

²⁹ House, *A Failure of Initiative: Final Report of the Select Bipartisan Committee to Investigate the Preparation for and Response to Hurricane Katrina*, 109th Cong., 2nd sess., 2006, 68-69, <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/katrinareport/fullreport.pdf> (accessed 14 April 2011).

³⁰ Senate, *Hurricane Katrina: A Nation Still Unprepared*, 109th Cong., 2nd sess., 2006, 8, <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/serialset/creports/pdf/sr109-322/execsummary.pdf> (accessed 4 April 2011).

effective coordination mechanisms. While both the USCG and DoD have unity of command, in their respective roles during Hurricane Katrina and Haiti in 2010, unity of effort suffered because of inefficient C2 and logistics functions. Neither organization had the existing relationships with local officials to connect disaster victims with essential relief supplies. The response in Haiti was also slowed because, as cited above, the DoD's HAST was not coordinated with OFDA's DART. During Hurricane Katrina, victims rescued from rising waters by the USCG then became victims again because they were not provided food and water. In neither case can outside forces be expected to immediately be cognizant of local culture. The NRF is an attempt to solve this lack of unity of effort by standardizing the response process for federal, state, and local levels in frequently exercised, operational plans. These frequently exercised operational plans drive interagency coordination because when local officials request outside resources, state and federal responders will be speaking the same language. During FHA operations, the host nation's language and culture presents the combatant commander with a problem that is often beyond his organization's response capacity. Since FHA operations present these unique challenges, interagency partners need to have even more effective C2 and logistics relationships than responders to domestic disasters.

The unrefined interagency process for requesting additional assets following Hurricane Katrina is similar to USAID's lack of input into DoD force requirements during the Haiti FHA operation. The NRF integrated agencies at all levels so that force requirements were pre-planned and local requests for augmentation were satisfactorily fulfilled. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) determined that the response to Hurricane Ike in 2008 was a success largely due to a unified command at the local level

generating requests for assistance to state and federal levels when required.³¹ Officials at local, state, and federal levels all had to work together to connect disaster victims with temporary housing, identify damaged buildings and provide contracting assistance for repair, and clear debris. If one compares USAID to FEMA and the Chief of Mission to local officials, then the lesson learned is that planning between DoD and USAID should include ensuring that USAID has input to the TPFDD created for an HA/DR OPLAN. Planners at the operational level would have to coordinate prior to a disaster to develop the requisite TPFDD.

Comparing Apples and Oranges?

The weakness in extracting principles from the NRF and applying them to interagency coordination during FHA operations is that the NRF is relatively untested. While there have been notable national disasters since the NRF's release in January of 2008, Hurricane Katrina surpassed them all in terms of destructive power. The argument could be made that the NRF should not yet inform operations concerning FHA. Lessons learned though from the response to Hurricane Ike suggest that the principles in the NRF are sound and should be reinforced, specifically those concepts that strengthen local authority.³² Likewise, DoD's innate lack of cultural understanding increases risk during FHA operations unless there is adequate interagency C2.

Interagency partners involved in FHA operations should adopt principles from the NRF now because shifting geopolitics makes it costly to wait. In the rankings of U.S. interests, Haiti is a relatively insignificant country that required massive amounts of aid

³¹ Richard Skinner, Office of the Inspector General, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, to Craig Fugate, Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator, memorandum, 6, http://www.dhs.gov/xoig/assets/mgmttrpts/OIG_09_78_June09.pdf (accesses 29 March 2011).

³² Ibid.

because its institutions and resources were inadequate. Imagine a disaster that wreaks havoc on a vital international partner in the western Pacific Ocean. Taiwan has approximately twice the population and 1.5 times the population density of Haiti.³³ The U.S. also has strategic interests in Taiwan. Interagency partners need to have a viable framework to respond during FHA operations because our international partners need to be kept strong.

Recommendations

The response to a foreign humanitarian crisis requires a whole of government approach and requires time to be invested in planning between the agencies that will most likely respond. Greater interagency unity of effort can be achieved through further collaboration at the operational level prior to an incident.

The most important recommendation for future FHA operations is that coordination mechanisms must provide C2 that is correct from the start. Based on historical precedent and current doctrine, OFDA is the most logical lead federal agency for an FHA operation. Because of its other operational commitments and inherent nature, the DoD is not suited for a long-term commitment for stability and reconstruction operations in a country hit by a disaster. DoD is currently best for mitigating short term suffering, so must recognize the roles and responsibilities of the lead federal agency from the start of an operation. Agencies such as USAID conduct stability and reconstruction operations long before and after the DoD's mission is complete. In the interests of unity of effort, the U.S. military, despite its enormous capability, should allow itself to become a capability used by the lead federal agency that will still be on the ground after the military departs.

³³ Central Intelligence Agency: The World Fact Book, "Taiwan," Central Intelligence Agency, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/tw.html> (accessed 22 April 2011).

Since local conditions are best understood by USAID and the Chief of Mission, they should have direct input into the military's plan to move its resources. The TPFDD is a vital planning tool and awareness of its importance should be increased across all agencies. There are many planning conferences that involve either determining force requirements for an HA/DR OPLAN or creating a TPFDD. USAID and the DoS need to be involved in this planning process. They know the conditions on the ground and know what is needed in the case of disaster.

The first few days of an FHA operation are vital to preserve life, and initial responders from different agencies need to coordinate their efforts. A perfectly coordinated plan will rarely fit the real world contingency. Time is a critical factor to determine the location of survivors and areas where there is the most damage following a disaster. Though the HAST (DoD) and DART (DoS) responders are one example of a breakdown in interagency coordination, there is certainly an enormous opportunity to determine other first responders from other agencies and NGO's and incorporate them into an effective initial response. The pre-planned responses found in the annexes of the National Response Framework provide a possible coordination structure between DoD and USAID to plan prior to an emergency. This advance planning would increase the speed of response and increase the number of lives saved.

Conclusion

Despite enormous U.S. resources, disaster response has many gaps and seams between the various agencies required to respond during an international crisis. Agencies tasked with coordinating a domestic response recently incorporated lessons learned into previously unsatisfactory doctrine. It would be prudent for the Defense Department, State

Department, and USAID to analyze the steps taken by FEMA. Any framework should be flexible enough so that if USAID is the lead federal agency, each responding agency can still respond with its own unique planning and execution systems. The constraint that the DoD must maintain unity of command during FHA operations is a gap that civilian officials and military planners can mitigate through a proper framework.

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